

VZCZCXRO3961  
RR RUEHMA RUEHPA  
DE RUEHAR #1006/01 2181622  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 051622Z AUG 08  
FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA  
TO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE  
RHMFISS/CDR USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE  
INFO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6835

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ACCRA 001006

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [GH](#) [IV](#)

SUBJECT: GHANA POLITICAL ROUNDUP

11. (U) Summary. The Electoral Commission on July 31 began the voter registration exercise, after months of delay. NPP supporters continue to wait for a decision on a running mate for Presidential Candidate Nana Akufo-Addo, who has assumed the role of the party's leader from President Kufuor. The PNC and CPP launched party platforms stressing domestic issues. Parliament passes an anti-terrorism bill. Four cases of trafficking in persons have been reported in recent days, following police actions. End Summary.

#### The Electoral Commission Begins Voter Registration

-----

12. (U) The Ghana Electoral Commission on July 31 initiated the long awaited (and delayed) voter registration exercise. Registration will continue until August 10. The EC will update the voter rolls by allowing those who have turned eighteen since the last update, two years ago, to register, along with enrolling others who have not previously registered. The EC estimates that one million new voters could join the rolls ahead of December's presidential and parliamentary elections. The opening of the exercise has been marked by heavy turnout, some confusion, and a few disturbances. The EC obtained only half of the five thousand cameras and computer works stations necessary to operate in every electoral area. As a result, electoral districts have been consolidated for the registration exercise, causing some confusion for those registering. In Tamale there was a skirmish at one registration center following reports that minors were being enrolled. (Comment: Post has fielded an observer team during the exercise, visiting stations in Central, Western and Ashanti Regions. Post will report on the observation trip. End Comment.)

#### NPP Has Yet to Announce Vice Presidential Candidate

-----

13. (U) President John A. Kufuor symbolically passed the mantle of party leadership to NPP presidential candidate Nana Addo-Dankwah Akufo-Addo at a well attended rally on July 13. Akufo-Addo used the event to introduce the party's selected parliamentary candidates for some of the nation's 230 constituencies. In some parliamentary constituencies a candidate has yet to be named. In other constituencies, local party members are protesting what they believe is the imposition of candidates by the party's national executives.

14. (U) The NPP flag bearer has yet to announce his choice of a running mate. The media continues to speculate on potential candidates. One often mentioned is Saddique Boniface Abubakar, Minister for Water Resources, Works and Housing. Other talked about candidates are Hajia Alima Mahama, Minister for Women and Children Affairs, and Alhaji Nureeden Jawula, Chief Director of the Ministry of Health. Jawula created a public controversy by appearing that the rally. As a civil servant, he is not suppose to engage in partisan politics, and there were calls for his resignation by some newspapers and the head of Ghana's civil service. All three are northerners and Muslims, considered important points in balancing the ticket. All three are also from

outside of northern conflict areas, important in not alienating blocks of voters. A decision should be announced by mid-August.

#### The PNC and CPP Release Party Platforms

-----

15. (U) Both the People's National Convention and the Convention People's Party have released party platforms. The PNC, running under the slogan of "Real Change-Real Hope," favors using improved technology to spur economic development. An enhanced Ministry of Science and Technology would be the focal point for policies and plans that "formulate, coordinate and infuse all national policies." The PNC promises a government that would balance regional economic and social development efforts to slow down the migration of young people to Ghana's urban areas. The PNC manifesto also calls for an independent Attorney General to better fight corruption, and consider making the position of District Chief Executive an elected office. The PNC flag bearer Dr. Edward Mahama, has been on a fund-raising visit the U.S.

16. (U) Dr. Paa Kwesi Nduom, candidate of the Convention People's Party, released his party's manifesto calling for a just and disciplined society. The manifesto sets a goal of an annual per capita income for Ghanaians of at least \$5,000 within ten years. Nduom called for the better access to health care, along with free and compulsory education. The manifesto calls for improved energy production in Ghana. (Note: Nduom was previously Minister of Public Sector Reform

ACCRA 00001006 002 OF 002

and Minister of Energy in the NPP government). He also calls for a strengthened Narcotics Control Board and other steps to counter-narcotics trafficking.

#### Parliament Passes an Anti-Terrorism Bill

-----

7.(U) Parliament on July 18 passed a long awaited anti-terrorism bill, first introduced in 2005. The Bill must receive Presidential approval in order to become law. (Comment: While the bill was passed, its final printing has been delayed. Post will report further on the legislation when a copy of the final document is available. End Comment.)

#### Trafficking in Persons Cases

-----

18. (U) Ghana's media reported on the arrest of six men charged with trafficking children. The six were arrested near the Cote d'Ivoire border, where they were using a bus to transport seventeen children. Allegedly, the children, from Togo, were being transported to CDI to work as laborers on cocoa farms. Earlier, a dozen children were freed in a raid in the Western Region. On August 4 the media reported that four adults had been arrested for transporting 155 children from the Central Region to work in the fishing and cocoa sectors in Cote d'Ivoire. The children are being turned over to the Department of Social Welfare. In Tamale, fifteen children continue to be in a shelter following their rescue from a Koranic teacher who was forcing them to beg. An EMBOFF visited the children and met with police officials. (Note: Post will provide an additional report on the Tamale situation. End Note.)

BROWN